

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE POLICY DIRECTIVE 52-2

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Chaplain

**ACCOMMODATION OF RELIGIOUS
PRACTICES IN THE AIR FORCE**

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This Policy Directive establishes Air Force policy for accommodation of religious practices. This publication implements DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*. To the extent its directions are inconsistent with other Air Force publications, the information herein prevails, in accordance with Air Force Instruction (AFI) 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*. It interfaces with Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 52-1, *Chaplain Corps*; AFI 1-1, *Air Force Standards*; AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*; AFI 36-2706, *Equal Opportunity Program Military and Civilian*; AFI 44-102, *Medical Care Management*; AFI 48-110, *Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for the Prevention of Infectious Disease*; and Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 34-240, *Food Service Program Management*. It applies to all Regular Air Force (AF) members, members of the Air Force Reserve Command, members of the Air National Guard, Air Force Academy and Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets, and civilian personnel. Ensure that all records created as a result of the processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance (IAW) with AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of IAW the Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) in the Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS). Refer recommended changes and conflicts between this and other publications to AF/HCX, 1380 Air Force Pentagon, Room 4D286, Washington, DC 20330-1380, on AF Form 847, *Recommendations for Change of Publication*; route AF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. This publication may not be supplemented. The use of the name or make of any specific manufacturer, commercial product, commodity, or service in this publication does not imply endorsement by the Air Force.

1. Policy.

1.1. The Air Force places a high value on the rights of Air Force members to observe the tenets of their respective religions or to observe no religion at all. The Air Force is dedicated to maintaining an environment in which people can realize their highest potential.

1.2. The Air Force has a compelling government interest in mission accomplishment, including the elements of mission accomplishment such as military readiness, unit cohesion, good order and discipline, health, and safety, on both the individual and unit levels.

1.3. Unless it would have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, or good order and discipline, commanders and supervisors will permit individual expressions of sincerely held beliefs (conscience, moral principles, or religious).

1.4. Airmen may request religious accommodations from military policy, practice, or duty. Unless the request would have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, good order, discipline, or health and safety, the Air Force will approve in a timely manner an individual request for accommodation of a religious practice. Airmen will continue to comply with the directives, instructions and lawful orders from which they are requesting accommodation unless and until the request is approved. However, Airmen are temporarily exempted from compliance in the cases of medical practices or immunization while the request is pending.

1.5. Commanders, Chaplain Corps personnel, medical providers, judge advocates, and other subject matter experts work as a team, as applicable, to determine the effect the request for accommodation of religious practices would have on the specific military policy, practice, or duty in terms of mission accomplishment, including military readiness, unit cohesion, good order, discipline, health and safety, or other military requirements.

1.6. In so far as practicable, an Airman's expression of sincerely held beliefs may not be used as the basis for any adverse personnel action, discrimination, or denial of promotion, schooling, training, or assignment.

1.7. Airmen whose requests for accommodation of religious practices are approved will be informed of the specific elements of that approval. Specific elements will include that the request will be reevaluated upon new assignment, transfer of duty station, or other significant change in circumstances.

1.8. This policy directive does not preclude appropriate disciplinary or administrative action for misconduct by an Airman requesting religious accommodation that is proscribed by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), including actions and speech that threaten good order and discipline.

2. Responsibilities and Authorities.

2.1. The Chief of Chaplains (AF/HC).

2.1.1. In coordination with the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services, develops policy, guidance, and advises leadership for management of requests for accommodation of religious practices pertaining to religious apparel, grooming and personal appearance, worship practices, and dietary practices.

2.1.2. In coordination with the Surgeon General, develops policy, guidance, and advises leadership for management of requests for religious practices pertaining to medical practices.

2.1.3. Develops policies and guidance for the accommodation of chaplains' religious beliefs.

2.2. Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services (AF/A1).

2.2.1. Serves as the approval authority for all requests for accommodation for religious practices pertaining to outdoor wear of religious apparel that cannot be concealed under approved uniform items and all other requests for accommodation for religious practices that require an exception to policy regarding grooming and personal appearance.

2.2.2. Serves as the final appeal authority for all denials of requests for accommodation for religious practices pertaining to wear of religious apparel, grooming and personal appearance, worship practices, and dietary restrictions.

2.3. The Surgeon General (AF/SG).

2.3.1. Serves as the final appeal authority for all denials of requests for accommodation for religious practices pertaining to medical practices. AF/SG may delegate this authority no lower than the Air Force Medical Operations Agency commander (AFMOA/CC).

2.3.2. Develops policies and guidance for the exemption of specific medical duties based on medical providers' religious beliefs.

DEBORAH LEE JAMES
Secretary of the Air Force

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

DoD Instruction 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, 22 January 2014

AFI 1-1, *Air Force Standards*, 7 August 2012

AFPD 52-1, *Chaplain Corps*, 19 December 2013

AFI 36-2706, *Equal Opportunity Program Military and Civilian*, 5 October 2010

AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*, 18 July 2011

AFI 44-102, *Medical Care Management*, 17 Mar 2015

AFI 48-110, *Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis for Prevention of Infectious Disease*, 7 October 2013

AFI 52-101, *Chaplain Planning and Organizing*, 5 December 2013

AFMAN 34-240, *Food Service Program Management*, 2 May 2005

Prescribed Forms

None.

Adopted Forms

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF—Air Force

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive

DoD—Department of Defense

DoDI—Department of Defense Instruction

MAJCOM—Major Command

UCMJ—Uniform Code of Military Justice